

**SUMMARY OF THE
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MARCH 9, 2000**

The Board of Directors of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference at 1:30 p.m. on March 9, 2000. The meeting was lead by Chair Dr. James Pearson of the Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services. Dr. Pearson followed the agenda distributed previously to board members. Action items from this meeting are shown in Attachment A, incomplete action items from past meetings are shown in Attachment B, and the list of participants is shown in Attachment C.

AGENDA ITEMS

Approval of Minutes

The draft minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and approved. The board then reviewed progress on the list of Action Items which has been updated to reflect this discussion.

Update on Transition Committee Activities

Dr. Brokopp provided an update on Transition Committee activities related to future funding of NELAC.

Issues for Presentation at the EPA Annual QA Meeting

Ms. Labie requested an update of NELAC/NELAP activities for her presentation at the EPA Annual QA Meeting, April 3-7, 2000 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Board provided an update on potential State accrediting authority applications, and the future funding of NELAC.

Letter from Puerto Rico Chemist's Association

Dr. Pearson discussed a letter received from the Puerto Rico Chemist's Association requesting information on how to apply to become an accrediting authority. Ms. Finazzo was familiar with the group and pointed out that it is a private group and does not operate Puerto Rico's environmental programs, therefore it cannot become an accrediting authority. Ms. Finazzo agreed to draft a response letter to the group for Dr. Pearson's signature.

Update on Assessor Training

Dr. Brokopp reviewed the Transition Committee's recommendations for attendance, and successful completion of the pilot basic assessors training courses. There was much discussion on the issue of acceptable performance on the course test. Following this discussion it was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved that:

"All those who attend the entire auditor training course which is being offered as a pilot project, and complete the final exam will be deemed to have successfully completed the course. The test results from these two courses will be analyzed at a later date to determine if a numeric score should be applied for subsequent assessor training courses."

In addition, the Board will recommend that all attendees be required to pay the course fee.

Policy on Selection of a Primary Accrediting Authority

Dr. Jackson presented a policy that could be used by laboratories and accrediting authorities in cases where a primary accrediting authority does not offer a full range of fields of testing. This policy (Attachment D) was approved by the Accrediting Authority workgroup and was brought to the Board by Dr. Jackson for approval. Following discussion on the benefits of the policy to the states and laboratories it was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved that:

“The Policy on Selection of a Primary Accrediting Authority shall be adopted as official NELAC policy.”

Membership & Outreach Committee Needs

Ms. Hankins discussed the current situation of the Membership & Outreach committee rotation schedule. Due to resignations and normal rotation schedules, the Membership & Outreach committee will lose seven of their 10 members this year. Dr. Irene Ronning, chair of the Membership & Outreach Committee has requested that the Board approve re-assignment of three current committee members. Ms. Hankins acknowledged that Board approval of reassignments is consistent with NELAC policy. It was the consensus of the Board that the reassignments be approved. Ms. Hankins will notify Dr. Ronning.

Field Activities Issues

Dr. Simmons presented the draft general Field Sampling standard to the Board. As written, it is consistent with ISO 17025. Dr. Simmons asked if consistency with the new ISO standard was appropriate. Dr. Jackson noted that in a previous Board meeting, the Board voted and approved a statement encouraging the adoption of ISO 17025 into the NELAC standards. Dr. Simmons asked where the Field Sampling standard will fit into the current standards. The Board agreed that the Field Sampling standard will become Chapter 7 of the NELAC Standards.

Mr. Bivins presented an update on the Field Activities draft Source Emission Standard. The committee has made a concerted effort to request feedback from affected parties on the draft standard. Mr. Bivins expects that the updated draft standard will be completed in March. The draft will be presented to stakeholders at a meeting in April, and Mr. Bivins will meet with the Board in May to discuss comments on the standard. Mr. Bivins would like NELAC to vote on the draft standard at the annual meeting.

Summary of NELAP Accrediting Authority Meetings

Dr. Pearson suggested that for future Board calls, Dr. Jackson and Dr. Kimsey prepare a short summary of Accrediting Authority issues that can be included in the agenda packet that Ms. Hankins sends prior to the teleconference. Dr. Jackson agreed.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of this board is scheduled for April 13, 2000

**NEW ACTION ITEMS
NELAC BOARD OF TELECONFERENCE
MARCH 9, 2000**

Item No.	Action	Status
1	Ms. Finazzo will prepare a letter for Dr. Pearson's signature responding to inquiry from Puerto Rico Chemist's Association regarding NELAC.	
2	Dr. Brokopp will provide copy of Transition Committee recommendations on the basic assessors training course to Board.	
3.	Ms. Finazzo will contact On-Site Assessment Committee to relay Board decisions on scoring and attendance of the basic assessors training.	
4.	Ms. Hankins will contact Membership and Outreach Committee to convey Boards approval of reassignment of three committee members.	
5.	Mr. Bivins will send copies of the updated draft source emission standard to the Board.	
6.	Dr. Jackson, and Dr. Kimsey will provide a short summary of recent Accrediting Authority workgroup teleconferences to Ms. Hankins to be included in the materials for the next board meeting. (Will be an on-going item).	

INCOMPLETE ACTION ITEMS FROM PAST MEETINGS

Date of Meeting	Action	Status
01/11/1999	Committee Chairs are to prepare "Frequently Asked Questions" for posting on the NELAC Website. They are to submit these to Dr. Irene Ronning.	On-going
02/04/1999	Ms. Hankins, Ms. Batterton, Ms. Sample and Dr. Hartwig will work on developing a training program for the Committee Chairs.	Completed
	Material was updated in response to comments. Ms. Sample and Ms. Labie will review.	On-going
9/23/1999	Dr. Jackson will draft a policy for responding to future offers of NELAC-associated activities at national meetings.	On-going
10/28/1999	Ms. Barbara Finazzo will coordinate contact of USEPA regional tribal coordinators to determine extent of existing tribal environmental programs, and interest in NELAC	Definite interest found; will continue to explore options.
12/2/1999	Ms. Hankins will distribute recent Federal Partners' meeting minutes in which exemption of federal agencies as secondary accrediting authorities is addressed.	On-going
1/18/2000	Ms. Hankins will seek clarification on USEPA's NELAC staffing plans.	Clarification requested; awaiting response
1/18/2000	Ms. Labie will contact Ms. Nancy Wentworth regarding presentation of a paper on current NELAC issues at the 19 th QA conference in Albuquerque, NM.	Completed
1/18/2000	Dr. Jackson will update a mailing list and finalize a letter to encourage participation in NELAC committees.	Will send letter out
	Board members will place follow-up calls to recipients as needed.	On-going
1/18/2000	Dr. Pearson will request a meeting with Deputy Administrator McCabe for NELAC board members.	Letter sent; waiting on response
2/10/00	Dr. Pearson will send his written appointment of Richard Sheibly to the On-site Assessment committee shortly.	On-going
2/10/00	Ms. Finazzo will check on the relevance of a presentation at the 2000 ACS national meeting and report back to the board.	On-going

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MARCH 9, 2000**

Name	Affiliation	Telephone Numbers
Dr. Jim Pearson Chair	VA Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services	Tel: 804-786-7905 Fax: 804-371-7973 E-mail: jpearson@dgs.state.va.us
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Mr. Dan Bivins (invited guest)	USEPA/OAR	Tel: (919) 541-5244 Fax: (919) 541-1039 E-mail: bivins.dan@epa.gov
Dr. Marcia Davies (invited)	USACE	Tel: 402-697-2555 Fax: 402-697-2595 E-mail: marcia.c.davies@usace.army.mil
Dr. Bart Simmons (invited guest)	CA EPA	Tel: (510) 540-3003 Fax: (510) 540-2305 E-mail: bsimmons@dtsc.ca.gov

Policy on Selection of a Primary Accrediting Authority

The NELAC standard (1.5.2.3.1) specifies that a state accrediting authority is the Primary Accrediting Authority (1°AA) for all non-federal NELAP accredited laboratories in that state. Further, if the state accrediting authority does not grant NELAP accreditation for testing in a particular field of testing, laboratories may obtain primary accreditation for that particular field of testing from any other accrediting authority. In conformance with this standard, the following policy shall apply.

1. Any laboratory located in a state that is a NELAP Accrediting Authority must first apply to that state (the home state) for Primary Accreditation.
2. The home state will then make a determination of the fields of testing for which it will be the 1°AA for that laboratory, and will communicate this to the laboratory.
3. The laboratory may then apply to any other NELAP Accrediting Authority to be the laboratory's 1°AA for fields of testing not offered by the home state. It is anticipated that most laboratories will have no more than two 1°AAs.
4. A state Accrediting Authority may elect to waive its right to be the 1°AA of a laboratory, thus permitting the laboratory to choose a 1°AA that will provide accreditation for all of the laboratory's fields of testing. The laboratory's home state will then be a Secondary Accrediting Authority (2°AA).
5. If a laboratory has two or more 1°AAs, the Accrediting Authorities may reach agreement that one of them will be an Assessor Body for the other Accrediting Authority (see NELAC standard 1.5.5, 6.3.3.1.f, 6.3.3.1.2, and 6.3.3.1.3.b.3). As an Assessor Body, the Accrediting Authority may perform some or all of the accreditation functions, including review of quality system documentation, proficiency test performance, and on-site assessment for all fields of testing. Each 1°AA will retain full authority and will issue certificates of accreditation for the fields of testing under its authority.